WRITTEN ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS

IRS – SOCIAL CONTRIBUTION

(No. B/514) Mr G. Lesjongard (Second Member for Port Louis North and Montagne Longue) asked the Minister of Housing and Lands whether, in regard to IRS projects, he will state when Government proposes to introduce new regulations under the Planning Obligation for determining the level of contribution for the benefit of the local community.

Reply (The Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Finance and Economic Development): It has been the stated policy of this Government to introduce a social component in the Integrated Resort Scheme (IRS) to ensure that local community also derives benefits on its implementation.

With this philosophy in mind, all IRS Certificates and Letters of Intent issued by the Board of Investment contain a specific provision for the promoters to “contribute to a planning obligation mechanism”.

Furthermore, I am proposing to make Regulations under the Investment Promotion Act to incorporate amongst others, the modalities for the social contribution by IRS promoters.

MARITIME LABOUR CONVENTION 2006 – RATIFICATION

(No. B/515) Mr G. Lesjongard (Second Member for Port Louis North and Montagne Longue) asked the Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Public Infrastructure, Land Transport and Shipping whether he will state if Mauritius has ratified the Maritime Labour Convention 2006 and, if not, why not.

Reply: The Maritime Labour Convention which was adopted in February 2006 is expected to come into force 12 months after registered ratifications by at least 30 member States, with a total share in the world gross tonnage of ships of 33 per cent. The Convention has been ratified by one country so far, according to information from the International Labour Organisation (ILO) website.

ILO has, in fact, commended Mauritius as one of the few countries to have organized, within a short time after the adoption of the Convention, a national seminar in January this year to sensitise stakeholders on the Convention
and work out an Action Plan for its ratification. We had the collaboration of the International Labour Organisation and the Director of International Labour Standards was personally present at the seminar.

An Action Plan was adopted at the seminar for the ratification of the Convention and a Task Force has been set up at my Ministry to coordinate the action required. As the ratification of the Convention would entail several legislative amendments, four working groups are presently working on the new regulations. Certain provisions of the Convention have been included in the new draft Merchant Shipping Bill.

RIVIÈRE DES GALETS – SEA SWELLS

(No. B/518) Mrs S. Hanoomanjee (Second Member for Savanne and Black River) asked the Minister of Environment and National Development Unit whether, in regard to the victims of the sea swells at Rivière des Galets, he will state if officers of his Ministry effected a site visit thereat and, if so, will he state the remedial measures that will be taken.

Reply: Site visits were effected on 14 and 18 May 2007.

Taking into consideration the site specificities and the hydrodynamics in the lagoon, it is proposed to proceed with the reinforcement of the existing structure over the whole affected and risky area in the short term. It is to be noted that these works are meant for the protection of the coast and prevention against beach erosion.

The scope of works already prepared for the coastal protection works before the episode of storm surge is being reviewed taking into consideration the effects of recent weather conditions.

I am also advised that mere reinforcement of the existing gabion structure may not be adequate to mitigate the impacts of high and strong waves at this particular site. Thus, in the medium term, my Ministry is considering the possibility to conduct a feasibility study for the placement of breakwater or other alternatives meant to dissipate energetic strong and high waves and which will mitigate impacts on the shoreline due to wave assaults.
EX-CHA HOUSES – LAND - SALE

(No. B/519) Mrs S. Hanoomanjee (Second Member for Savanne and Black River) asked the Minister of Housing and Lands whether, in regard to the sale of land to the inhabitants of the ex-CHA houses, he will state the details of the expenses the buyers thereof will have to incur before the conclusion of the sale.

Reply: I thank the hon. Member for giving me an additional opportunity to reiterate our caring Government’s commitment to the democratisation of the economy, to the democratisation of access of land, and to empowerment of the people, to help them to help themselves. The State Land (Amendment) Act 2007 is a glaring example as well as a tangible proof of Government’s policy of caring for our people, while supporting and encouraging them to be responsible and accountable citizens, bringing their own contributions to their own welfare.

In regard to the sale of State land on which stand ex-CHA houses, the house owners would need to incur the following expenses before the conclusion of the sale -

(i) settlement of any outstanding arrears of land rent;
(ii) payment of Rs2000 for the purchase of the plot of State land;
(iii) settlement of the following costs in accordance with the provisions of the State Land (Amendment) Act 2007 –
    (a) Rs200 as registration duty;
    (b) Rs200 as transcription duty
(iv) payment of notary fee, and
(v) payment of survey fee (if required)

In regard to the cost of drawing up the notarial deed and survey of the land, I am further advised that –

(i) the notarial fee would be approximately Rs550 as indicated at a meeting by one Notary Public, Mr Redmond Hart de Keating, and which figure is known to the Chambre de Notaires, and
(ii) discussions are ongoing with the Mauritius Institute of Surveyors to look into how the survey fee could be minimised.

May I add that Government has gone a step further to ensure that ancillary expenses related to the sale of State land are much less than those incurred for the purchase of ex-CHA houses, and may I also refer to hon. Member to my reply to PQ B/366.

May I once again thank the hon. Member for the question.
FREE TRANSPORT SCHEME – BUS OWNERS - PAYMENTS

(No. B/547) Mr P. Jhugroo (Third Member for Port Louis North and Montagne Longue) asked the Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Public Infrastructure, Land Transport and Shipping whether, in regard to the free transport scheme, he is aware of the cases of some bus owners who have received payments from the National Transport Authority, although their buses were not in operation and, if so, will he, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Authority, information as to –

(a) the number of cases, indicating the amount paid;
(b) the action initiated for the recovery of these amounts, and
(c) if Government proposes to review the mode of payment to avoid such malpractices in future

Reply: I am informed that two bus operators claimed compensation from the National Transport Authority (NTA) in respect of the free travel scheme when their buses were actually off the road. A total amount of Rs147,000 has thus been paid.

The NTA has already taken steps to recoup the full amount by withholding the compensation payable to those operators for subsequent months and is initiating disciplinary action against both operators, in accordance with the Road Traffic Act.

With regard to part (c), there already exists a number of control mechanisms which enable the NTA to detect malpractices and withhold compensation. However, a full audit of the present system is being carried out so as to identify shortcomings and reinforce these mechanisms. In case malpractices by bus operators continue, the mode of payment may be reviewed.

PHOENIX ROUNDABOUT/ST JEAN - TRAFFIC CONGESTION -

(No. B/548) Mr P. Jhugroo (Third Member for Port Louis North and Montagne Longue) asked the Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Public Infrastructure, Land Transport and Shipping whether, in regard to traffic congestion, he will state if it is proposed to construct a third lane between the Phoenix roundabout and St Jean to improve traffic flow and, if so, when and, if not, why not.

Reply: I am informed by the Road Development Authority that it is not intended to construct a third lane between Phoenix roundabout and St Jean. It has been found that the traffic congestion is caused by Pont Fer roundabout where the bottleneck occurs.
In the context of the implementation of the Phoenix-Beaux Songes Link Road, a study is being carried out to convert the Pont Fer roundabout into a grade-separated junction. The construction of a third lane can only be considered after removing the bottleneck at Pont Fer.

VICTORIA HOSPITAL – THYROID (TFT) TEST

(No. B/553) Mr S. Dayal (Second Member for Quartier Militaire and Moka) asked the Minister of Health and Quality of Life whether he will state if tests for Thyroid (TFT) are no longer effected at the Victoria Hospital, and if so, the reasons therefor.

Reply: I am informed that tests for Thyroid are currently being effected at Victoria Hospital.

QUARTIER MILLITAIRE - FOOTBALL GROUND

(No. B/554) Mr S. Dayal (Second Member for Quartier Militaire and Moka) asked the Minister of Youth and Sports whether, following the conversion of the Quartier Militaire football ground into a stadium, he will state if it is proposed to provide an alternative football ground thereat.

(Withdrawn)
(No. A/14) Mr S. Lauthan (Third Member for Port Louis Maritime and Port Louis East) asked the Minister of Local Government whether, in regard to each of the projects undertaken by the Municipal Council of Port Louis for the period October 2000 to June 2005 in Constituency No. 3 (Port Louis Maritime and Port Louis East), he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain therefrom a list thereof, indicating in each case the total expenditure incurred and the date of completion.

Reply: The information requested by the hon. Member has been obtained from the Municipality of Port Louis and is being laid on the Table of the National Assembly.